

AN UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT—OCTOBER 27, 2021

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New DAC Q&A: Save the Date

MDE will host the first New DAC Q&A webinar of the 2021–22 school year on Tuesday, Nov. 16, from 2–3 p.m.

New DAC Q&A webinars are held monthly and cover either available resources for new DACs, or chapters of the [Procedures Manual](#). DACs can submit their questions ahead of time or during the event. These webinars are intended to provide a conversational setting where new DACs can receive support on existing resources and upcoming tasks. Q&A webinars are not recorded as they are not trainings and do not provide any new content, as all answers are available in the prerequisites.

To prepare for the November New DAC Q&A webinar, DACs should review Chapters 2, 3, and 5 of the *Procedures Manual*. Experienced DACs are also welcome to attend.

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New DAC Orientation: Availability in the Training Management System (TMS)

The recordings of the three New DAC Orientation sessions will be available on Friday, Oct. 29, in the [Training Management System \(TMS\)](#) on the District Assessment Coordinator tab in the MDE Recorded Webinars category.

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District Test Security Procedure

Each school district must have a written district test security procedure that addresses how test security policies and procedures will be implemented. This procedure must be reviewed and updated annually, as needed, before training or resources on district-specific policies and procedures is provided.

The *District Test Security Procedure Requirements* in Appendix B of the [Procedures Manual](#) contain a list of the specific topics that must be minimally addressed in the district test security procedure, including a comprehensive list of the policies and procedures that each district must determine. Note: There were no additions to this list for 2021–22.

Districts can use the sample district test security procedure template available on the [PearsonAccess Next](#) website or create their own procedure. However, MDE strongly recommends using the template in order to ensure all requirements are addressed completely. Districts that have used the template tend to receive fewer recommended changes or required actions during MDE’s review of their test security procedures.

- All statewide assessments administered in the district (MCA, MTAS, ACCESS, and Alternate ACCESS) must be reflected in the procedure. If procedures vary by assessment, this must be noted.
- Districts must specify policies by school, if they vary, and can include additional documentation as needed for their district. DACs may also have School Assessment Coordinators or other school staff complete the procedure for their school and return it to the DAC for documentation.
- Roles (e.g., DAC, principal) or individual staff member names should be included to specify who is responsible for the given tasks.

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2021–22 College Entrance Exam Requirement

As in past years, districts are required to offer a nationally recognized college entrance exam (ACT or SAT) to grades 11 and 12 students during a 2021–22 school day. Districts must enter into a contract directly with the test vendor. The requirements for offering a college entrance exam have not changed and are detailed in the [Procedures Manual](#). More information about ACT and College Board is included below.

ACT

- View administration information, Free/Reduced Lunch Program (FRLP) pricing structure, and key testing dates and deadlines on the [ACT District Testing](#) page.
- Districts will need to provide ACT the percentage of students that are eligible for free or reduced-priced meals to determine if the district will get a reduced price from ACT.
- Contact April Hansen at april.hansen@act.org with any questions and to get your unique link to register. Note: This year, you can click through the terms and conditions and update your organization file and registration information all in one step.

College Board

- View administration information on the [SAT School Day](#) page
- Additional information about the deadlines for registration are on the [SAT Timeline to Test Day](#) page.
- Contact Andy Houpt at ahoupt@collegeboard.org with any questions.

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Independent Contractor Opportunity: MTAS Field Auditors

Each year, MDE employs Field Auditors to observe MTAS administrations in selected schools around the state in order to gather evidence and evaluate the validity and reliability of the assessment. MTAS Field Auditors serve as evidence-gatherers; their job is to obtain evidence that will determine 1) the extent to which the training of the administration was properly implemented and 2) the consistency of the administration for students across the state. For 2021–22, MDE is looking for auditors who can commit to work with MDE between 4–7 days of work from February–May 2022.

MTAS Field Auditors must be able to travel within an approximate 100-mile radius of their home area and have the following qualifications to serve on behalf of MDE:

Minimum Qualifications

- Current or retired educator or administrator, with Minnesota licensure
- Experience working with students with disabilities in an educational setting
- Three years of classroom experience
- To protect, to the extent reasonably possible, the health and safety of employees, school staff, and students from the direct threat resulting from the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace and to members of the public, MDE employees and contractors must provide proof of full vaccination against COVID-19 or weekly negative COVID tests

Desired Qualifications

- Current or retired teacher or administrator with special education licensure or endorsements, particularly those for teaching students who would likely qualify for the MTAS (e.g., Developmental Cognitive Disability certification)
- Experience working with students with significant cognitive disabilities in an educational setting
- Five years or more of classroom experience
- Previous experience with the MTAS as a Test Administrator or Field Auditor
- Familiarity with ESSA and IDEA policies and requirements
- Access and ability to use email, the Internet, and Microsoft Word and Excel. The email address must be accessible only to the auditor for student privacy reasons.

If you or someone you know may be interested in learning more about this contract work, an application to become an MTAS Field Auditor as well as details on compensation, schedule, and tasks can be requested from Dawn Cameron at dawn.cameron@state.mn.us.

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Upcoming COMPASS Learning Opportunities

Collaborative Minnesota Partnerships to Advance Student Success, [COMPASS](#), is a new statewide education system that is a collaboration between the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Minnesota Service Cooperatives and Regional Centers for Excellence. COMPASS is designed to meet schools and districts where they are in the work to accelerate student learning and match the state's response to those needs.

Throughout the 2021–22 school year and beyond, educators, school staff and school leaders will have new opportunities for professional learning and coaching, along with coordinated support from experts. Schools will gain support in the areas of Literacy, Math and School Climate and Mental Health using the Minnesota Multi-Tiered System of Support (MnMTSS) framework with a focus on data and assessment literacy and evidence-based practices.

The first supports for schools available through COMPASS will be available in November, beginning with a two-part Minnesota Multi-tiered System of Support (MnMTSS) Overview webinar. In December, there will be webinars on Data and Assessment Literacy. Learn more and register for those webinars on the [COMPASS](#) page.

Any school staff who would like to learn more about COMPASS and its upcoming learning opportunities can sign up for [email updates](#) from the COMPASS leadership team.

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Odds and Ends

Benchmark Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) for Math and Reading

A brief description and link to the Benchmark ALDs have been added to the [Achievement Level Descriptors](#) page of MDE website. The Benchmark ALDs give detailed descriptions of the knowledge, skills, and abilities demonstrated by students across the four achievement levels on the MCA at each grade level that educators can use for planning instruction and assessment.

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Minnesota Department of Education

education.mn.gov > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing

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